

Sport, Health & Outdoor Education

Assessment Feedback Sheet

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Module: Professional Development and Practice

Module Code: SHSS4062

Personal Evaluation – to support your academic progress please complete the section below BEFORE submitting your work.									
What do you consider to be the best aspects of this work?	Relevant sources correctly referenced, good structure.								
Which aspects do you consider could have been improved in this piece of work?	Better knowledge of content, and more first hand research								
What have you found most satisfying whilst undertaking this submission?	Becoming comfortable with writing essays and seeing the final product finished								
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Learning Outcomes	GRADE							
		Poor 0-25%	Unsatisfactory 26-39%	Satisfactory 40 – 49%	Good 50 – 59%	Very Good 60 – 69%	Excellent 70 – 85%	Exceptional 86– 100%	%
Essay content and quality of resources used	1								30%
Referencing within the essay	1								20%
Correctly constructed reference list	1								20%
Structure of essay and clarity of writing	1								30%
It is expected that students will present work that is proof read, correctly referenced and adheres to the Assessment Checklist . Therefore a range of 0 – 10 marks will be deducted for non-completion of any of the points on the checklist below.									

TUTOR COMMENTS:**Submission date: 1/11/19
via Turnitin****Return date: 8/11/19
(at least within 4
weeks)****Tutor:****Mark:**

The advantages of children learning outdoors

The outdoors can have a significant positive impact on a child's learning. Outdoor learning and learning through exercise can help children become more confident and outgoing, more aware of their bodies, and more comfortable in their abilities. By instilling a sense of bodily awareness adventure training can give individual children opportunities to grow and learn more about themselves and their abilities, and will also help to reduce childhood obesity rates and could have significant impact on society's health related issues. Learning outdoors can also give children an appreciation for nature and, with society's current preoccupation with climate change, can help children to understand environmental change and its implications for their own future. Outdoor adventure training can specifically help children with additional needs such as autism, attention deficit disorders, anxiety disorders, as well as many more, to understand themselves, feel more confident, and enable them to learn in a way that is suitable to their needs. The benefits of learning outdoors can be better engagement, increased sociability and better academic achievement.

In more recent years there has been a decline with how involved children are with the outdoors. There are a number of factors that could be the cause to this, whether it be the modernisation of at home entertainment, and the rapid growth of online learning resources. The National Trust conducted a study into the amount of time children spend outdoors. One of the results found in this study was that 10% of the respondents had not visited a natural environment such as a park, forest or beach for at least a year. (Natural England, 2016). It has also been found that children aged between ten and sixteen years old only spend twelve and a half minutes a day on vigorous outdoor activities. (Seattle children research Institute, 2015).

With these statistics in mind it is essential that a bigger emphasis be made on children learning in outdoor environments, or else risk losing the many advantages of not just outdoor based learning, but also those of play and health. A healthy amount of play has been shown to increase children's cognitive ability and social skills by offering problem solving situations, working within teams and communication. Not only this but playing outside is also a vital source of vitamin D, even in colder months, which is paramount to preventing Rickets. The reduction of time spent playing outside can also be seen as a contributing factor to childhood obesity, as time spent outside playing or taking part in physical activities is vital to providing children with a chance to exercise. The importance of play is highlighted in a publication for the American Academy of Pediatrics where it was concluded that "As we strive to create the optimal developmental milieu for children, it remains imperative that play be included along with academic and social-enrichment opportunities and that safe environments be made available to all children" (Kenneth R. Ginsburg, 2007). Even though it may be a far cry from classroom based methods the importance outdoor pursuits such as sports, adventure training and playing cannot be understated.

The outdoors also offers a great way to teach school lessons such as biology or geography by giving the option to visit environments where the subject matter is relevant.

Examples of this could be taking children to forests or parks to learn about food chains and different plant life, or visiting a coastal area to explain the water cycle or rock characterisations and erosion. Learning in this way can leave an impact on children and can nurture a healthy relationship with the outdoors. Such educational possibilities include limiting any negative impacts left on the environment, the animals and plant life in the area and can help nurture a sense of curiosity, adventure and a personal attachment. This prospect is not only a positive on an individual scale but can also prove an advantage on a national scale, with the next generation becoming more environmentally aware and cautious of any harmful impacts they may make. Educating children about the effects humans have on the planet both as individuals and as a collective has already proven extremely beneficial to children and the environment, with the popularity of beach cleans, litter picking, recycling and respecting wildlife becoming an increasingly frequent site among schools and other youth organisations.

As more and more investigations find that the current education system yields less rewards and positives towards a child's learning, schools and other educational bodies are turning towards an experiential learning approach. As more children get to experience education in different environments the importance of outdoor learning becomes evermore prevalent. The Council for Outside Learning state that learning in outdoor environments has been proven to raise attainment and achievement and improve behaviour and pupil engagement, including those who are usually hard to engage in a classroom. (CLOtC, 2019)

Adventure training activities can greatly increase a child's confidence and offer the chance for children to be taken outside of their comfort zones. A huge benefit offered by the opportunity to learn outdoors is the affect it can have on children who have additional needs. For young children with conditions such as autism, ADHD and others the feasibility to run around in a forest, explore a cave or climb a rock wall can be the most effective way for a child to learn. By experiencing the outdoors first hand these children can learn in a way that is individual and unique, which simply cannot be translated into a class room learning environment. The outdoors also offers a lifeline for school pupils who may struggle in a normal classroom environment to make the most out of the lesson. A great example of this is when children with hyper activity disorders are given the freedom to run or climb. When they have a chance to channel their energy into something they are good at they often show traits you may find in other pupils who study in a classroom such as confidence in subject, engagement with the subject, keen interest and real comprehension from the lesson.

Outdoor activities can also be extremely beneficial to children with other additional needs such as autism or anxiety disorders. The sense of accomplishment that regularly accompanies these activities, such as reaching the top of a climb or completing a high ropes course can instil real self-confidence in children, who otherwise may find struggles in classroom based learning environments. This self-confidence is then often translated into everyday life for the child in question, inducing more confidence in social and academic situations by instilling a 'if I can do that, I can do anything' spirit. This has been supported in an experiment carried out in 2016; 51 children aged between three and eight years old who were pre-diagnosed with

ASD were put into two groups, one outdoor group and one control group. After thirteen weeks on an outdoor adventure training programme the outdoor group showed a significant increase in communication, daily living skills, socialisation, and motor skills. The indoor group were found to have higher scores in the SRS test, which measures social awareness, social motivation, social cognition, social communication and autistic mannerisms where higher scores indicate greater impairment. The outdoor group however were observed to have a steady reduction in their SRS scores. (Department of Pediatrics Et Al, 2017)

The various studies and experiments regarding children learning in the outdoors have all yielded similar results and conclusions; learning in an outdoor environment comes with many varied benefits regarding learning, social skills, problem solving and exercise, as well as constructing a more balanced learning system that can help all children achieve academically and socially. The possibility of the outdoors being used as a platform to help reach children that have additional needs also offers a much needed alternative to more traditional teaching methods, and it will be interesting to see what further research uncovers. To continue to improve healthy, safe and effective learning environments for children of all levels and abilities is essential that the proper amount of pupil time and development be spent outdoors.

Word Count: 1351

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